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Speech pathology has vital role

Speech pathologists in the Illawarra have helped launch Speech Pathology Week, held each year to celebrate the speech pathology profession and its vital role in supporting Australians with communication difficulties.

Wollongong Hospital deputy speech pathologist Beth King said one in seven Australians had some form of communication disorder.

'Communication disorders can range in duration and severity and can involve problems with speech, using and understanding language, voice, fluency, hearing, reading and writing,' she said.

'Having a communication disorder can make simple daily activities, such as ordering lunch, paying a bill or buying a bus ticket, both frustrating and difficult.'

Ms King said children and adults

with communication difficulties may suffer mental health issues and behavioural problems, display poor self-esteem and could struggle to manage social relationships and sustain employment.

'Disorders can be hereditary, occur in childhood or happen as the result of stroke, neurological disease or serious injury,' she said.

She said Speech Pathology Week provided an opportunity to raise awareness of speech pathologists work helping local people with language difficulties.

'Fittingly, this year's theme Language for Life explores the importance of communication through all stages of life,' she said.

Log onto www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au for more information.